

## STREET MATTERS.

CHARLES STREET GRADING CAUSES MORE DISCUSSION.

**Road Committee Gets Back the Money Paid Out for the Work—Certificates of Indebtedness will be Issued—Mr. Walker Makes Some Inquiries About Spruce Street.**

Matters connected with the opening of new streets were a topic of lengthy discussion at the Town Council meeting Monday night.

Councilman Conlan, Chairman of the Road Committee, asked that \$17,000 expended by the Road Committee of the previous year for work done in opening and widening Charles Street be returned to the funds of the Road Committee. As this was the first request of the kind ever brought before the Council, it led to a general talk over the method of paying for such work.

Attorney Halfpenny stated that when the Council in compliance with a petition undertook the opening and widening of a new street, certificates of indebtedness could be issued when eighty per cent. of the work was completed; additional certificates could be issued when ninety per cent. of the work was completed, and when the work was finished, approved and accepted certificates for the balance were issuable, and then the entire issue of certificates were redeemable from the proceeds of bonds issued, the bonds to run ten years and to be paid by the property benefited by the work. The certificates bore interest at the rate of six per cent.

Mr. Moore asked some questions relating to the certificates and bonds. He wanted to know if the certificates had to be paid out of the general tax in addition to the money voted for road repairs.

Mr. Halfpenny replied that the certificates were not paid out of the general tax.

Mr. Moore then asked if the proceeding was not similar to the method of paying for sewers.

Mr. Halfpenny replied that it was.

Mr. Conlan then made a formal motion that the transfer be asked for tax made.

Mr. Moore asked why the cost of the Charles Street work was paid out of the road account in the first place.

"Because my predecessor in the Chairmanship of the Road Committee made a mistake," Mr. Conlan replied.

Mr. Moore inquired if there was any other street than Charles Street in which the Road Committee's funds were involved, and he said that as he understood this proposed transfer, if it was made, the town would be compelled to issue the certificates.

Mr. Walker took a hand in the discussion by asking how long the property-owners would have to pay the indebtedness for which the town assumed responsibility.

Chairman Peterson made a statement reviewing the entire Charles Street case, and he said that when the work was done the men employed by the Road Committee had to be paid and were paid. The matter was now in the hands of the Assessment Commissioners, he said, for final adjustment.

Mr. Conlan suggested that the Charles Street certificates be issued when the Grace Street work was undertaken.

After disposing of the Charles Street matter Mr. Walker brought up the Spruce Street case.

Edward G. Ward, one of the interested parties, Mr. Walker said, had asked him to inquire as to the status of the Spruce Street work.

Attorney Halfpenny stated that the parties who wanted Spruce Street widened had undertaken to secure consents and deeds from the property-owners along the street whose property would be affected by the widening. Some of the owners made deeds of their property and the documents were held by him in escrow.

The attempt to get deeds from all the necessary property-owners had failed, and no decision had yet been reached whether the project of widening the street would be abandoned or whether it would be undertaken in accordance with the course prescribed by the statute.

Olive Street was another street named in the discussion as having been petitioned for to be opened.

## THE LAW AND THE LADY.

TWO FORCES FEARED BY THE PUBLIC GROUNDS COMMITTEE.

Otherwise Overhanging Branches of shade Trees Would be Lopped Off—Chairman Peterson Insists Upon It that the Public Grounds Committee Should Take Action—Mr. Walker Waiting for Mr. Farrand.

Just before the Town Council session closed Monday night Chairman Peterson demanded from Mr. Walker an explanation as to why the Public Grounds Committee had taken no action in the matter of trimming the low-hanging branches of trees along the streets of the town. The matter had been referred to the Public Grounds Committee at a previous meeting of the Council.

Mr. Walker gave three reasons for the delay in carrying out the directions of Council and complying with the request of a number of citizens. In the first place he was doubtful about the legal rights of the Public Grounds Committee to undertake the trimming of the trees in front of and along private property. A private ownership in trees was recognized to a certain extent, and it was not clear to Mr. Walker if the Council could legally chop limbs off the trees without the property-owners' permission or consent. Another reason assigned by Mr. Walker was founded on the experience of Councilman Uangst, who undertook the same work last year, and tells some thrilling stories of his encounters with infuriated women who were incensed at what they regarded as high-handed vandalism on the part of the Councilman in cutting limbs from trees in front of their houses.

Chairman Peterson was not disposed to accept either reason as excuseable for delaying a piece of work in which so many people were interested. Men with high hats were indignant over the uncouth manner in which their trees were topped from their heads by contact with low-hanging tree branches.

People who carried umbrellas in times of storm were provoked over the difficulties they had to encounter in passing under trees. People who did not carry umbrellas but ventured out after a sufficient lapse of time for a storm to pass over were rendered swaying mad by a hit in the face from a wet bunch of leaves while passing under trees, and various other people had various other reasons for demanding that the trees be trimmed.

Mr. Walker's doubts on the legal phase of the matter were unfounded, as the town law gave the Council ample power in the premises. The overcomers of the wrath of indignant females was a matter for the exercise of suavity and diplomacy.

Mr. Walker did not raise a point, however, that exonerated him largely from responsibility in the matter. The Chairman evidently assumed that Mr. Walker was Chairman of the Public Grounds Committee, but the latter pointed out that the honor belonged to Mr. Farrand and that Mr. Walker only held second place on the committee, but he said he would consult with his colleague as soon as possible and arrange to attend to the matter.

### Favors a Franchise

The East Orange *Gazette* urges the granting of a franchise to the Essex Cross Railway Company by the City Council. It says:

As for the termini of the road: Must all roads lead to Newark? Can a cross country road, eleven miles long, between Bloomfield at one end and Elizabeth at the other, be fairly said to begin nowhere and end nowhere, simply because it does not lead to Newark? All objections seem to be summed up in the question of transfers, and in advancing this argument with such persistence the opponents of the road lay themselves open to the very natural suspicion that they are working in the interest of the North Jersey Company, a suspicion which we do not believe is just to any one of them. If no application for a trolley franchise is to be considered in this city unless transfers to the North Jersey lines are guaranteed, we must decide that we will deal with none but the North Jersey Company and that we will add our municipal assistance to strengthen that monopoly. When we have established that principle, we will be absolutely in the power of that company, who, with all competition stilled by the City Council's action, will make such terms as it sees fit in providing trolley facilities in East Orange. The question of transfers can be adjusted only by mutual agreement between two competing companies, and it is entirely beyond the power of either of those companies to grant them without the consent of the other. Naturally the established company will refuse to enter such an agreement, if by such refusal it can secure the overthrow of a rival company.

To suggest other routes or to insist that the franchise should be given to some other company is but to beg the issue, as only one route is applied for, on which the necessary consents have

been obtained, and only one company is applying for the franchise.

We believe that a crosstown road will be of benefit to East Orange, and if the members of the City Council are of the same opinion they should grant the franchise applied for under the best terms that can be made, regardless of personal considerations.

### Making Progress

The Essex Cross Railway Company made an important step forward Tuesday night, when the Irvington Village Council passed the company's franchise ordinance to first reading. The company has been hard at work in Irvington for the past eight months endeavoring to secure a franchise, and the fight has been a fierce one, and Tuesday night's battle was a hot affair. President Eppley of the railway company got excited. Members of the Council got angry, and citizens who were divided pro and con on the question said hard things about one another. The Town Hall was crowded, and Mr. Eppley had the time of his life in defending himself and his company against the objections of Councilmen and citizens.

President Eppley spoke to the Council on a number of objections from Union Avenue. "The Methodist Church," he said, "has no right to protest and cannot legally do so as it has entered into an agreement with us by which it is to receive \$1,000 a year. We have the majority of the Union Avenue in spite of the many objections."

Continuing, Mr. Eppley said: "If you want a road you will have to take it now, for I will not fool around any longer trying to please people. The road has met with opposition at every turn. First in Cottage Street; next we were told to go back to the ponds, but there the road would have struck somebody's chicken coop, and we were knocked out in that direction. Then we were told that if we came down Cummings Street we would surely get through. There one man wanted the company to buy his two hundred feet of property. I think now that we will have to build a bridge over the town."

One member of the Council wanted to make the granting of the franchise conditional on the action of the East Orange Council.

"I will never vote for that franchise until it is granted in East Orange," said Mr. Sharp. "I have it from good authority that the road will never get through that city without giving transfers."

"The ordinance has already been passed on its first reading in Bloomfield," said Mr. Eppley. "In the city of East Orange," he continued, "we have had a hard time getting signatures. We had three miles of small lots from which to obtain them from owners. We were obliged to put in a new petition for a single track with turnouts in East Orange. That is what came up on Friday night. I believe we will get that franchise."

Councilman Frey said he looked to the Elizabeth end of the route more than the other. "Connections with Elizabeth will be a great benefit for small home-builders," he said. "We of the Second Ward want connection with Elizabeth, but the bone of contention seems to be with the Third Ward, which wants connection with the Oranges. I am in favor of passing Mr. Eppley's ordinance on a first reading, as it can be amended later."

Councilman Sharp looked on the Essex Cross Railway project as a scheme to get a franchise and then sell out to the North Jersey Company.

"It may be a part of the North Jersey a few months after we grant you the franchise," said Mr. Sharp.

"On the contrary, Mr. Sharp," replied Mr. Eppley, "we are going to buy out the North Jersey. That is the truth, too."

After some further discussion, on motion of Councilman Cooper the ordinance was introduced on its first reading.

Councilman Tuttle was the only one who opposed it.

The hearing was adjourned to August 19, after the cheering had subsided. Then Mr. Eppley thanked the Council, and apologized to any one whom he had offended.

### A Hard Fight

For seven hours Friday night the East Orange City Council listened to protests against the granting of a franchise to the Essex Cross Railway Company, and arguments in favor of it. The remarks were spirited and interest in the proceedings was kept at high pitch till the end. Mr. Jackson presided in the absence of Chairman Cardwell, and Mr. Gedney was also absent.

The first speaker after Clerk Long read the petition for the road was Edward K. Summerwell, who represented the people opposed to the trolley. He said that the Council should consider carefully the petition, that the consents should be scrutinized; that some people had signed and wished to withdraw. "I have personal knowledge that the majority of people on North Clinton Street are unalterably opposed to the franchise," said Mr. Summerwell. This is

perhaps a more serious matter than you think. This is a narrow street, only twenty-eight feet wide. Over 500 children play in the street. Where will they go if the trolley goes through the street? What of the road itself? It is a Jim Crow road—begins somewhere and ends nowhere. The corporation of the road cannot give you transfers. Some people gave their consents believing that they would be given. If this franchise is given it will only be a short time before the North Jersey will take it."

Mr. Summerwell further emphasized the fact that the proposed road, in its estimation, was only a scheme of the North Jersey Company. Alfred Duff of Amherst Street objected because there was a large sewer in that street. Frank F. Baynard had a protest.

M. L. Eppley sent a communication stating that he had spent \$20,000 in building up Amherst Street, with the assurance that no trolley would be built there. Henry W. Albers created a sensation and a considerable amount of laughter by stating that he had been approached so often to secure his consent that he had to give his consent to get rid of the representatives of the road. He said that he wanted to withdraw. Henry Withington lived in the northern part of the city and wanted the trolley.

Thomas R. Greely made a long address, in which he argued against the trolley. He said that when the matter was before the Council last spring the opponents had fairly beaten the company, and that they now came in with the same petition, changing it to a six-mile road.

Frank M. Eppley, President of the road, said that the people who opposed the road ought to be ashamed of themselves, and that they lacked intelligence. He made a long argument for the road. He said almost eighty per cent. of the people voted for the trolley, and that over 200 acres of land were awaiting development. George B. Darby also made a long speech favoring the road.

A. M. Moore opposed it, as did Marvin Dodd. John Keay favored it. David Bingham said that there were no objections to every improvement in East Orange, and that the trolley was needed. Thomas J. Hawley also favored the trolley, and James S. Keay said that it would be a benefit to East Orange. Several other speakers had a hand in the debate. It was decided to adjourn the meeting until Aug. 19.

## TAX RATE 2.90.

DECREASE OF THIRTY-FIVE POINTS FROM LAST YEAR.

County Rate Advanced—Increase in Tax Tables—Much Property Exempt from Taxation.

The County Board of Assessors met in the Court-house on Monday and fixed the county tax rate for the current year. Tax Commissioner William Harrington of Newark presided at the meeting and Seymour P. Gilbert of this town was chosen Secretary.

The total taxable valuations as returned by the Assessors of the several municipalities of the county footed up as follows: Real property, \$1,011,307; personal property, \$10,125,012; exemptions of firemen and veterans, \$1,865,510; net valuations, \$239,191,240; and the resulting tax rate 59.38, or, as it will appear in local tax bills, 59 points, an increase of five points over last year.

The local tax rate for the coming year will be 2.90, a decrease of 35 points below last year's rate, a remarkably large decrease for a year. The local tax rate is divided as follows: County, 50 points; lighting, 20 points; police, 12 points; fire, 8 points; roads, 10 points; pool, 6 points; water, 22 points; bonds and interest, 38 points; incidents, 12 points; schools, 72 points.

The return of valuations made to the County Board of Assessors for this town were as follows: Real property, \$4,352,450; personal, \$763,000; exemptions to veterans and firemen, \$68,700; total net valuations, \$5,016,750, an increase over last year of \$155,249. The returns show 2,813 separate pieces of property assessed. Several causes operated against an increase in the amount of personal valuations this year.

The Assessors had to make a large allowance for real property exempt from taxation, such as school and church property, parks and other land used for public purposes, and the property of charitable institutions. The exemptions thus allowed foot up on valuations \$493,750.

The large reduction in the tax rate will prove gratifying to property-owners and all others interested in the welfare of the town. Last year it was rather humiliating to see nearly every other municipality in the county making reductions in the tax rate, while the rate of this town had to be marked up to unprecedented figures. This year the tables are turned. The Bloomfield rate goes down, while the rate in many nearby municipalities will be marked up. Newark leads off with a rate of 2.22 for this year, an increase of 8 points over last year.

The tax rate in Glen Ridge borough this year is approximated at 2.70. The borough valuations reported to the County Board were as follows: Real, \$1,657,000; personal, \$195,500; exemptions, \$22,500; net total, \$1,830,000.

## NEARBY TAX RATES.

REMARKABLE CHANGE IN THE SITUATION SINCE LAST YEAR.

Then This Town's Rate Went Up While that of Other Places Went Down—Local Tax Payers Now have the Laugh on Their Neighbors.

The tax rate for Belleville for the current year, as figured out by Assessor William Connolly and Collector A. H. Osborne, will be the same as that of last year, \$2.66 on each \$100 of valuation. The general township, however, shows a decrease of eleven points, and but for an increase in the county rate and a special assessment for the local Health Board a much decreased rate would be shown this year.

The increase in the Newark tax rate from 2.14 to 2.22, and the decrease in the local rate from 3.25 to 2.90, fully substantiates the argument made by the anti-annexationists before the Legislative Committee at Trenton last winter, when it was declared that such a result was highly probable.

In Union County along the lines of the railroads that traverse that county are a number of towns that are somewhat similar in conditions and aspirations to this town. The tax rates in those places for the current year is as follows:

Clark, 2.55; Eastwood, 2.68; Elizabeth, 2.96; Fanwood, 2.50; Linden township, 1.68; Littleton borough, 1.91; Mountainside, 2.30; New Providence township, 2.32; New Providence borough, 2.40; Plainfield, 2.51; Roselle borough, 2.40; Roselle Park, 2.28; Springfield, 2.40; Summit, 2.51; Union, 1.97; Westfield, 2.51.

The East Orange City Council held a special meeting Tuesday night and fixed the tax rate at 2.72. This is seven points higher than last year, five points being due to the increase in the county rate. Notwithstanding the increased expenses of the city and the amount spent down because of the large increase in valuations.

It is anticipated that the Glen Ridge borough tax rate for the current year will be 2.70.

The Montclair tax rate will be 2.80, the same as last year.

The West Orange rate is 2.78, an increase of ten points. The local raise was caused by increased expenses for schools, including the building of a new school, and by smallpox.

The city of Orange rate will be 2.82, an increase of thirteen points over last year.

South Orange's taxable rate will be 2.50 and South Orange's tax rate 2.2.

Irvington rate will be 2.21, an increase of twenty points over last year.

There appears to have been a complete turn of the tables this year between this town and the other municipalities in the county in the matter of the tax rate. Last year the laugh was on Bloomfield when its tax rate soared upward, while nearly every other place in the county showed a reduced tax rate. It is Bloomfield's turn to smile now.